TOILAESTHETICS

The Berkeley Inn burned and was condemned by the City and the building was demolished by wrecking ball and the ruins became People's Park Annex for a short while, a Hooverville, a tent city for the homeless, then the landlord had the squators kicked off by the cops and an iron fence put up to ensure the safety of the lot, but upon those ruins rose one of the strangest museums in Berkeley's checkered history. At first there were only a few old television tubes out there, then a few toilet bowls and a shopping cart or two, but soon there were more toilet bowls and piles of toilet seats, all of them painted with orange and green day-glo and embellished with poetry and aphorisms. By November of 1993, the corner of Haste and Telegraph had become a cage of toiletic art, a New Sense Museum, a tribute to marginality and absurdism. After all, what could be more appropriate than yuppies sitting in the window of the Intermezzo coffeehouse eating their salads and croutons while gazing across the street at a sea of pink and orange toilets? A landscape broken only by the passing of students, lawyers, cops on bicycles, panhandlers, and an occasional activist or politico on the way to People's Park. All gone now. All those toilet bowls and tanks and seats and old shopping carts were missing by early December, just in time for the shopping season. An empty fenced-in mudhole once again. We'll never know who hoised all those day-glo toilets over the fence in the middle of the night, but Julia Winograd will probably have a poem about it in her next book of poetry. Some things never change around here.

Clay Geerdes **COMIX WAVE 145**
©1993. POB 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved. Artwork and material herein © the artists concerned and used here for promotional purposes only. $12 for the next 12 issues. $50 for a complete set of back issues. Checks to Clay Geerdes. Cash or MOs fine.

If you're dying to see what Berkeley's naked guy looks like in the flesh, you can get a copy of the **1994 Telegraph Avenue Street Calendar** from Bruce Duncan, c/o BEFP, 2362 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, CA 94704. $12 pp. The cover features a group of naked activists walking down the Avenue followed by photographers. Andy Martinez, the naked guy, climbed into national fame by climbing out of his clothes--that's all it takes to become famous in contemporary America?? This important event got coverage all over and I expected to hear about copycat stripping on campuses from the University of Nebraska to Notre Dame. Locally, Andy triggered changes in campus rules and a new ordinance in the Berkeley Municipal Code.

Seems a couple of guards found a Barbie doll, enhanced it a bit with some pubic hair and nipples and left it in another guard's space at Sandia National Laboratories. A female guard saw it, found it threatening, turned her fellow guard in for sexual harassment and guess what? The guy was fired. He is now having to sue to get his job back! The two who resexed Barbie got only reprimands. The moral of this story? Don't play with dolls? Don't let a woman catch you playing with dolls? Beware of sexually enhancing Barbie dolls? No matter how boring your job is, keep humor out of the workplace and be particularly serious and businesslike when a woman is present? All of the above?

Did you see **MORT THE DEAD TEENAGER?** Marvel started the title in 1993 and this is the first time a male underground cartoonists has made the transition to Marvel. Trina worked on Wonder Woman for a fw issues. Gary Hallgren, who developed Mort for Larry Hama's script, has come a long way since his days in the Air Pirates studio back in the early seventies. Take a look at **MORT**. I think you're enjoy it.

Bernie Mireault's **THE JAM** continues in issue 6 from Dark Horse, 10956 SE Main Street, Milwaukee, Oregon 97222. $3.25 pp. Ask for a list of their comics. Also from Dark Horse, **Grendel Tales 4**.

I just read an article about political correctness in the comic strips, all about the way people write in to protest the gags of Mort Walker and other cartoonists. Well, so what? Underground comix were never politically correct and none of the real comix ever will be. How can anyone be honest and maintain political correctness? Paul Krassner, editor of **THE REALIST**, just finished a tour promoting his autobiography. He did an hour and a half show at Ashkenaz in Berkeley on November 7th and I was there to hear him start off with a routine about political correctness. Like many stand-up comedians, Krassner's humor is often self-directed. He gets a lot of mileage out of his experiences as a satirist among the hippies and yippies of yesterday. I see the whole PC trip as hypocrisy in action. What is it, after all, but image maintenance? When Jesse Jackson made a reference to *Hymietown* a few years back, he was saying what he really thought. Trying to cover it up later by saying *what he really meant was* didn't fool anyone anymore than government references to lethal weapons as peacekeepers. There was a brief period in the sixties and early seventies when underground newspapers told people what was happening and called the corporate propaganda what it was, promo for the capitalist product, but reality did not survive that period and we no longer have a viable underground press as an antidote to megamedia lies.

How can a cartoonist be true to his vision and be politically correct? When Lynn Johnson dealt with gay teenagers in her strip, she found herself cancelled from a lot of papers and she got a lot of mail. Mort Walker has the general flirting with his secretary and a couple of women walk out on his presentation at the San Diego Comic Convention. I find these absurd reactions. Mainly because comic characters are not real. They are figments of a cartoonist's imagination and it doesn't matter whether they look like dressed-up mice or costumed superheroes and heroines, they are still fantasy, not reality. What difference does it make if Brenda Starr is a woman when she does the same thing a male reporter would do? Her female biology is not dealt with in the strip. There are people who would argue that Brenda Starr is PC because it is done by a woman artist. I don't buy that. There are a lot of memorable women characters in the world of comics and most of them were created by male artists. Why was Wonder Woman accepted as an authentic character and put on the cover of the second issue of *Ms. Magazine* in 1972 when WW was invented by William Moulton Marsten as a female version of Superman? Lois Lane, who--surprise!--had her own title for nearly 20 years from 1958 to the mid-seventies, was a far more interesting and complex character than Wonder Woman. I wasn't surprised to see that Lois survived the Salkind series of mega-Superman films in the eighties to get top billing in the new Lois and Clark tv series. A lot more can be made out of a writer like Lois than a collection of gimmicks like Wonder Woman.

I've never been convinced that there was a concentrated conscious effort made to keep women out of the comics business. Seems to me that the women who really wanted to get in, and had the talent and skills necessary, got in. I'm thinking of Grace Drayton, Tarpé Mills, Marie Severin, Gladys Parker, Marge Henderson Beull,and countless others. When underground comix began, most of them were done by men, but women got in when they wanted to. Those who were willing to follow the pattern and do their own books went as far with them as most of the men. It was not a business in which cartoonists were destined to become wealthy. The only way I know one can make a lot of money with cartoons is to have a widely syndicated strip. A handful of young cartoonists are making big money with certain comic book ideas right now, but will this continue? Who knows?

I'm a little more than bugged with the whole PC trip. I think things were a lot healthier when cartoonists kicked out the jams and drew anything they felt like drawing, let it all hang out. Fuck the taboos. All fantasies out in the open where they can be dealt with. When Crumb was criticized by feminists, he created Devil Girl and had Mr. Natural do all kinds of violent and gross things to her, a plausible reaction; after all, in underground comix, if you weren't violating all the taboos and resisting any kind of repression you weren't living up to the Code, which for many was to reverse all the tenets of the Comics Code Authority of 1954.

PC is the new taboo.

PAINFUL
SCIENCE FICTION STORIES
NO. 1
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD HIM, "WHENEVER WE LAND ON A PLANET WITH NO ATMOSPHERE, ALWAYS CHECK TO SEE THAT YOUR FLY IS ZIPPED!" BUT DOES HE LISTEN? NOOOOOO!

I got a lot of laughs out of Diane DiMassa's **HOTHEAD PAISAN; HOMICIDAL LESBIAN TERRORIST #12.** You didn't even know there was one issue, huh? I found this one in a magazine store in Berkeley, not a comic book store. So shame on you guys for letting this one get away. Men do not fare well in this comic, but then did we fare all that well in Crumb or other comic books? Depends on your point of view. Hothead Paisan likes to kick male butt the way Crumb used to spank female butt and she obviously delights in cartooning it all. There is a large paperback book collection of the early PAISAN strips, so you can become an addict. Meanwhile, you can get the latest issue for $3.52 pp from Giant Ass Publishing, POB 214, New Haven, CT 06502. She'll send you a free catalog. Nice to see women publishing their own comic books in contrast to those who take their stuff to male publishers then run on publicly about how feminist they are.

Last Gasp has published a complete collection of R. Crumb and Aline Kominsky-Crumb's **DIRTY LAUNDRY**. There were two issues of this title done in 1977. Aline told **THE COMICS JOURNAL** the book happened when she was laid up with a broken ankle. Crumb got her started on it. They communicated through the artwork and the project was unique in comic history. I know of no other jam like it.

Rip Off Press has survived. It is currently operated as a mail order company out of Auburn, California. Send a couple of bucks to Kathe Todd for Rip Off's latest publications. **POB 4686, Auburn 95604.**

DI Schutz is editing the **ALIENS/PREDATOR** series from Dark Horse.

Bruce Stengl sent me a copy of **RABBIT BOY 5**. The entire series is available from Bruce. $1 each or $5 for the set. 633 King St., Apt. 13, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

O. J. Simpson's real name? Orinthal James Simpson. You need to know things like that.

Clark Dissmeyer strikes again with two new four-page minis. **PAINFUL SCIENCE FICTION STORIES 1** and **SNORTIN' SORCERY.** Clark must be catching up on the comic trends of the early seventies. Gary Usher has nearly completed an extensive profile and bibliography of early newaver Clark D, which should be in print somewhere soon. Send Clark a buck at 2313 Central, #7, Kearney, NE 68847 and get in on this new brain rot.

Commercials are showing up on videocasettes now and to those putting that rot on the tapes I promise to boycott any product advertised therein. When I buy or rent a video I pay for the show and I resent any commercial intrusion on my life. It's bad enough to have to sit through hours of ads for unhealthy and useless products on regular tv. You readers who share my view may want to do what I do. I cover the slot on back of the casette and erase the hype so the next time I watch the tape I won't have to look at that shit. Remember to remove the transparent tape after erasure to avoid accidentally recording over the movie.

Counted the ads in comic books lately? Ask yourself why the cover price is so high when half the magazine consists of ads you'd rather not see.

CEREBUS 177 continues Dave Sim's **MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS** series and previews Nina Paley's book. If you don't see **CEREBUS** locally, write to Aardvark-Vanaheim, POB 1674, Sta C., Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2.

Joe Bob Briggs defends **BEAVIS AND BUTTHEAD** in the December 27, 1993 issue of **THE JOE BOB REPORT**. He also takes on Janet Reno over the Violence on TV hoopla. I fluctuate on this issue. The most violence I saw on tv last year was cops beating up people on the streets of Berkeley and San Francisco, but what do I know? I always laugh at stuff like **TERMINATOR** and **ROBOCOP** movies the way I laughed at Bugs Bunny cartoons. I guess I got desensitized to the whole movie trip when I worked on a couple of movies way back. I remember watching this guy add some red vegetable coloring to a jar of karo syrup to make a supply of blood for this Vampire movie. Now when I see all that blood on screen, I just start thinking about having pancakes for breakfast. Send $3 to Joe Bob and check out the **REPORT**. POB 2002, Dallas, Tx 75221.

SANTA GOES TO
CHRISTMAS! FOR SOME, A TIME OF JOY, A TIME OF PEACE, OF GIVING — A TIME FOR BEING WITH ONE'S FAMILY...
FOR OTHERS, A HORRIFYING, MIND-NUMBING, TREE-KILLING, TOY-SELLING
TORMENT!
...I'M DREAMING OF A BLAAAAACK CHRISTMAS!
THERE, HE IS!
C'MON, NICK — IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN! YOU GOT WORK TO DO!
NO! NO! LEAVE ME ALONE!
IS THAT TOILY OLD SAINT NICK? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE FOUR BASTARDS?
NOW IT CAN BE REVEALED!
WHY CAN'T YOU FUCKERS JUST LET ME DIE!?
CAD'S ©1973 CAD

Zack Mosley died of a heart attack at Martin Memorial Medical Center in Stuart Florida, Tuesday, December 21, 1993. He was 87. Zack created one of my favorite comic strips, **SMILIN' JACK.** His biography is called **BRAVE COWARD ZACK.**

PRO/con 2 and WONDER CON

If you're a pro and you're interested in **PRO/con**, write and ask for details of this year's gathering at the Parc Oakland Hotel, April 20 & 21. **PRO/con 1** was successful last year, so it is happening again this year. **WONDER CON** is set for April 22-24. Details from **Bryan Unlenbrock**, 2991 Shattuck Avenue, Suite 202, Berkeley, California 94705. [510] 644-1886. Fax [510]644-1678.

To get in on all the local San Francisco gossip, check out an issue of **FILTH.** POB 426712, SF, CA 94103. Send a couple of bucks. Ask for #11, the conspiracy issue. Lots of great stuff about all the assassinations and plots and counterplots.

"WHEN I TOLD THE GUYS, THEY WERE UPSET, BUT RESIGNED TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT."
SIGH... AN ORDER'S AN ORDER I GUESS.
OH, WELL-LOOK AT IT THIS WAY-THERE'S NOT ONE OF US WHO DOESN'T OUTWEIGH HIM BY AT LEAST 100 POUNDS...
©TERRY LABAN, 1993.

Terry Laban's **CUD 5** is on sale. More of the life and times of the big guy